

SENATE RESOLUTION 307

By Finney L

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. Gene L. Davenport on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those educators who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gene L. Davenport is one such estimable educator who has served with distinction as a Professor of Religion and the Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Lambuth University, where he has served as a member of the faculty since 1963; in addition, he renders sterling service as Chair of the Steering Committee for the Lambuth B'nai Israel Center for Jewish Studies; and

WHEREAS, having dedicated his professional career to higher education for forty-five illustrious years, Dr. Davenport has taken a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his distinguished work at the University, Dr. Davenport is a certified teacher of Christian Education to developmentally disabled children and adults, is an ordained Deacon and Elder in the United States Methodist Church, and has served part-time as a pastor in churches in north Alabama, Tennessee, and Memphis Annual Conferences; and

WHEREAS, he lends his talents as a *Jackson Sun* columnist, often writing about world affairs from a theological perspective, and hosts a weekly one-hour radio program on WTJS-AM, presenting topics relating to the church, politics, and literature; and

WHEREAS, demonstrating great professional expertise, Dr. Davenport has penned numerous books and articles, is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, and participates in the biannual Seminar on Enoch Literature; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Davenport received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Birmingham-Southern and both his Bachelor of Divinity degree and Doctorate degree in Religion from

Vanderbilt University; he also completed graduate work in Education for the Mentally Retarded at the University of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, a highly respected citizen of Memphis, Dr. Gene Davenport is an active and important part of his community and his profession, participating in numerous worthy organizations, including the Memphis Annual Conference, serving as its Director of Camps for developmentally disabled children and adults, and the United Methodist Church and Tennessee Holocaust Commission, standing as a commissioner for both; and

WHEREAS, a public servant of the highest order who reaches out to the most vulnerable citizens in his community, Dr. Davenport has lent his support to the Jackson Chapter of the Association for Retarded Citizens, the Internal Review Board for West Tennessee Health Care, and as a Client Advocate with Effective Advocacy for Citizens with Handicaps; and

WHEREAS, he has also contributed his time and energies to various positions of leadership, including holding several offices in the North Alabama Conference Methodist Youth Fellowship, as President of the National Methodist Youth Fellowship Commission, as the Wesley Foundation Director at Middle Tennessee State University, and as a Bible Study Leader at the annual meeting of the United Methodist Church's Board of Global Ministries and the southeastern Jurisdiction laymen's Assembly; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman of many and varied interests, Dr. Davenport is renowned for his talents as a performer and writer of western music; he has performed at the Old Country Store, Silver Dollar City, Western Music Association festivals, and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. He is a founding member of the western music group, O.K. Chorale and hosted a weekly radio program of old time country music and western music on WTNV-FM in Jackson; and

WHEREAS, his many professional achievements aside, Dr. Davenport is the proud father of two daughters and enjoys spending time with his nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gene Davenport exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, he has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we extend to Dr. Gene L. Davenport our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, even as we recognize his singular contributions to Lambuth University and to the field of theology, and wish him every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.